

*Parents'
Information*



The Beacon

Leading Independent Preparatory School for boys aged 4-13
Amersham, Buckinghamshire

Welcome

The Beacon is an independent day school for boys aged 4 to 13. We prepare boys for secondary education through a broad curriculum that offers both richness and diversity of opportunity. From the very first steps in initial learning, to success in competitive examinations, our priority is to ensure sound academic development within a happy and stimulating community. In addition, we aim to give all the boys the skills they need to thrive throughout their adult lives, along with a lifelong curiosity and love of learning.

Boys are educated by a caring and dedicated team of expert teachers in well-resourced buildings set in beautiful surroundings, with 16 acres of playing fields. High expectations encourage each boy to perform to his best – in the classroom, on the playing fields, in Music and in Drama. Whatever your son's ability, we will strive to meet his needs throughout his time at The Beacon.

Our ethos is encapsulated in the words, 'Traditional Values, Contemporary Education, World-Class Experience'. We hope you will come and visit us. We welcome the opportunity to meet you, show you our School and answer your questions.

For further information, do visit our website at beaconschool.co.uk.

To enquire further about admission to the School, please telephone 01494 432764 or email admissions@beaconschool.co.uk.



William Phelps
Headmaster



We will always be grateful for the very valuable contribution The Beacon has made to our son's education. We cannot thank you enough.

– Beacon Parent



Our Values and Principles

The Beacon's mission is to inspire boys to achieve their best within a happy, secure and stimulating environment, providing education of the highest quality, delivered by an enthusiastic and committed team of teachers and staff.

To achieve this, The Beacon embodies five core values and all those involved in the School are expected to act in accordance with these:

Integrity – behaving with honesty and strong moral principles

Respect – valuing all individuals, having due consideration and empathy for their wishes, feelings and rights

Achievement – valuing and aspiring for intellectual, sporting, creative and spiritual success via effort, skill and risk-taking and celebrating one another's endeavours

Wellbeing – developing fully as a person, both physically and emotionally, so that children are confident, healthy and happy

Courage – striving to do one's best and making an effort despite difficulties or fears, building resilience and self-confidence



Expectations and Development

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Our values and principles underpin the **educational aspirations** of The Beacon. We aim to inspire boys to want to attain excellence in all they do, to put in the effort required to achieve this and to have the broadest range of opportunities and activities available to them. To do this we:

- **Promote** high standards of academic achievement through consistently high expectations and encouragement
- **Nurture** talent and provide opportunity for all, across the curriculum
- **Enable** boys to develop the social and emotional skills needed to believe in themselves, to show consideration and respect for others and to value diversity
- **Foster** lifelong thinking, learning and communication skills to enable boys to work independently and as part of a team.

His progress in all aspects has been phenomenal and he would not have done this without the help of your incredibly dedicated and talented staff.

– Beacon Parent



Opportunity, depth and breadth

There are many opportunities at The Beacon for boys to achieve success. We strive to encourage a love for knowledge and learning that will last a lifetime. We expect boys to achieve high academic standards and to take advantage of the many opportunities to broaden skills and interests through Sport, Music, Performing Arts and the Creative Arts.

Our programme of **International Studies** prepares boys for the multicultural, contemporary society in which they live. It develops good language skills and teaches them that learning about other countries is fascinating, relevant and also great fun!

All boys from Year 3 to Year 8 have specialist taught **IT lessons**. This enables the maximum development of their skills and ensures that they are competent and comfortable in their use of IT.

Independent learning is a key component of The Beacon curriculum. There are **two libraries**, one for Pre-Prep and the other for Years 3 to 8. Both libraries are open all day, every day, and our full-time Librarian works across them both. The boys are encouraged to develop a love of reading and staff take time to understand and assess each boy's abilities and interests so that they can offer him books he will enjoy and which will help him to enhance his literary skills. The boys are also encouraged to develop information gathering and processing skills. Our Main School library contains computers and iPads in addition to the extensive book stock.

Our **Sustainable Learning** programme is embedded across the curriculum in all year groups and aims to raise awareness of current environmental issues.

There are **educational trips** for all boys from the youngest to the eldest. Residential trips from the age of nine include activity courses, language trips to France and Spain, international sporting tours, choir trips to Europe and North America and adventure camping. These trips strengthen the sense of community within the School and encourage boys to take responsibility for themselves and for others.

Extra-curricular clubs play an important part in School life, broadening horizons and finding hidden talents. With a wide range of activities, there are opportunities for boys of all ages to get involved.



Sport for all

Sport at The Beacon is **all-inclusive**, fostering teamwork, development of self-esteem and interpersonal skills. Facilities are first class, with a Sports hall, Astro turf, swimming pool and 16 acres of playing fields with a beautiful rural aspect.

Whilst physical fitness and skills acquisition, coupled with teamwork and practical performance, are important elements of the curriculum, we also encourage social and emotional wellbeing through sport. Specialist PE staff teach all sports lessons from Reception through to Year 8.

Our major sports are rugby, football and cricket. Every boy from age seven upwards plays matches against teams of a similar standard. Boys of all abilities have the opportunity to play competitively and represent both the School and their house in matches.

PE lessons provide a full range of activities, including athletics, basketball, HIT (High Intensity Training), SAQ (Speed, Agility and Quickness), gymnastics, hockey, swimming and tennis.

The Beacon has won national tournaments in tennis, hockey and cross country, both at individual and team level. In rugby, football and cricket, we are one of the strongest schools in the region and have won trophies at all levels. We are very proud of our sporting achievements and this is reflected in the pride all the boys show in pulling on a Beacon jersey and representing their School on the playing fields.



We would like to thank every single member of staff who has been involved in teaching or mentoring our son, as everyone has made a significant and valuable contribution. – Beacon Parent



The Creative Arts

At The Beacon, we aim for all children to enjoy **Art**, and to develop confidence in their own abilities. We provide opportunities for using a wide range of materials and equipment in our large purpose-built studio. Each boy has access to iPads to enable them to record and research projects. We also have wonderful pottery, painting and printing facilities to help your son to explore and develop his creativity. The boys are taught the Creative Arts by our specialist staff from Year 4 upwards. Boys can work on projects during break times and in after-school clubs.

A number of Art scholarships have been awarded to major public schools in recent years.

In **Design & Technology** boys learn how to transform good ideas using excellent design facilities and to create products with flair and innovation. Your son will learn to combine traditional handwork skills with modern computer design software to give his creative skills free rein. The latest CAM technology is used in addition to two laser cutters, a CNC router, a vinyl cutter and a 3D printer.

Boys are taught **Cooking & Nutrition** in Years 4, 5 and 6 in a well-equipped Food Technology department and gain an understanding of different cooking techniques and food safety. From fruit salad to Chinese stir fry, cooking is practical-based and great fun. The annual Beacon MasterCook competition is very popular, with the boys producing wonderfully imaginative dishes, which both look and taste delicious.



The Performing Arts

Music and Drama are an integral part of school life and both are highly valued at The Beacon. All boys, from Reception through to Year 5, receive three Performing Arts lessons a week (Music, Drama and Singing), and Reception boys also enjoy weekly Music and Movement sessions. In Years 6, 7 and 8, our boys engage in the Performing Arts through a Music and Drama rotation that is very much cross curricular. Every boy is encouraged to learn an instrument or sing in a choir, and we have a strong record of boys obtaining Music and Drama scholarships at independent senior schools.

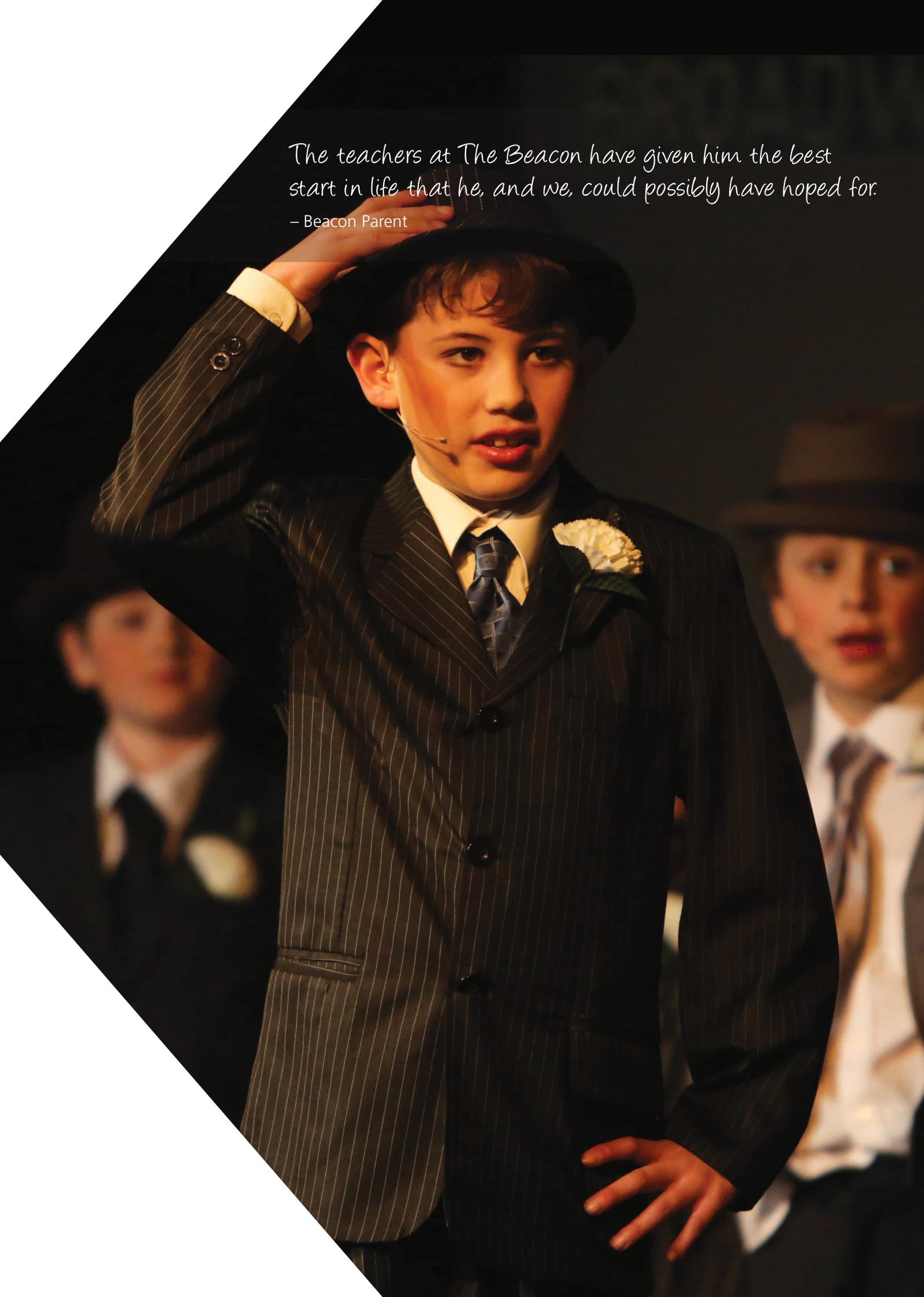
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Our **Music** department comprises a large teaching room, eight practice rooms and a music technology suite equipped with Apple Mac computers and iPads. A huge number of extra-curricular activities are offered, and over 400 boys engage in weekly music, LAMDA or voice tuition lessons, provided by 30 specialist teachers. There are performance opportunities in ensembles, plays, large-scale musicals and choirs. Over 200 boys sing in School choirs across the year groups, and biennial choir tours to Europe and further afield are well established and hugely popular. There is even a Parent and Staff Choir.

In **Drama**, every boy is given at least two public performance opportunities each year. Recent productions include *Madagascar Jr!*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Bugsy Malone* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. LAMDA tuition is offered from Year 4 upwards, and all boys in Year 3 also work towards introductory exams during class Drama lessons. Our incredible facilities include a drama studio, a 220-seat theatre, sound and lighting equipment, costume store and flexible staging. Boys in the Upper School act as crew for their own productions and gain insights into aspects of technical theatre. In recent years, our older boys have travelled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, performing to sell-out audiences and five-star reviews.

The teachers at The Beacon have given him the best start in life that he, and we, could possibly have hoped for.

– Beacon Parent



Pastoral Care and Learning Support

Strong pastoral care ensures happy pupils and happy pupils achieve more in their studies. At The Beacon, our values and principles reflect the need to value ourselves, our families and friends, the diversity of our society and the environment in which we live.

We have a well-established system of introductory meetings and a pupil/buddy programme to help new boys settle into the School. Form Tutors are an important link in ensuring pupils' wellbeing, and good communication between home and School is encouraged.

In Pre-Prep and Lower School, 'Circle Time' and 'Golden / Privilege Time' are powerful tools to help boys recognise the needs of others. Moral and ethical issues are dealt with sensitively through the school's comprehensive PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) programme. There is a vigorous anti-bullying policy and two flourishing School Councils, giving boys the opportunity to discuss issues and make suggestions. There are regular House and School assemblies, which are often pupil-led.

The first point of contact for **communication** with the School is the Class Teacher or Form Tutor. A full list of contact details can be found on the School's Parent Portal.

The **Learning Support** Centre caters for the needs of a wide range of boys and includes those with mild specific learning difficulties as well as those requiring more in-depth support. Research shows that the best outcomes are obtained when intervention is in place early in a child's life and we aim to identify pupils who need help as early as possible. Multi-sensory methods are used to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and help them to achieve their full potential. Learning support is offered by a team of specialist staff through small group teaching, individual or paired lessons or support in class.



Wellbeing, Food and Health

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At The Beacon **good food** is an important part of daily life. We are committed to providing boys with nutritious, tasty and well-balanced food, using fresh and locally-sourced ingredients. Menus are developed on a weekly basis and take full advantage of seasonal produce. As much food as possible is prepared from scratch on site, with the emphasis on fresh ingredients. Home-made puddings, cakes, biscuits, yoghurt pots and fruit salads are all freshly prepared each day. We encourage children to be adventurous by introducing themed menus, exposing them to new flavours, textures and tastes. We operate a strict 'no nuts' policy and cater for a variety of special diets. All the food produced is free from artificial additives, E-numbers and hydrogenated fats. There is always a hot dish, a hot vegetarian option, jacket potatoes with a range of toppings and a very well-stocked salad bar available.

Medical cover is provided by professional, qualified staff based in the School Medical Centre under the direction of our Matron.

A qualified **School Counsellor** provides incredible support for boys and their families.

The pastoral care at The Beacon is second to none. All my boys have felt safe and secure in their learning environment, able to take risks in the knowledge they will always be supported.

– Beacon Parent

Pre-Prep Age 4 to 7

Pre-Prep begins with Reception at age four, where boys will learn to socialise and to develop concentration and motor skills. Our boys are monitored and assessed regularly throughout their years in Pre-Prep and beyond to ensure that they are reaching their full potential. There can be a gap between boys' and girls' attainment at this age and our aim is to ensure that each boy reaches his own optimum level.

The school follows the statutory **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS). Teachers plan activities which deliver this in a style tailored specifically for boys. The areas of the curriculum are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design
- Personal, social and emotional development

The daily programme is structured, yet designed to be flexible so that staff can follow each child's individual needs, interests and progress.

Boys move on to Years 1 and 2 as happy, confident individuals with a strong social awareness, a readiness for more formal learning and a taste for the education and adventures that lie ahead. Boys from Reception onwards are taught by a Class Teacher with a full-time assistant and in addition, specialist teachers for Music and Movement, PE and Games. Boys in Years 1 and 2 are also taught by a specialist Drama teacher. International Studies is taught to boys from Year 2 onwards. All boys participate in Sports Day and swimming events.

Music and drama play an integral role in the boys' education and all boys perform in annual productions. A variety of after-school clubs is available to boys from Year 1 upwards. These include Chess, Singing, Art, Spanish and Story-telling. Boys can take individual instrumental lessons when ready, often in Year 2. There is also a range of fun and educational school trips in which to participate and all Pre-Prep boys enjoy Learning Outside the Classroom sessions throughout the year. Details of the **Pre-Prep day** can be found on our website.



Lower School

Age 7 to 9

From the age of seven boys enter Lower School, which comprises Years 3 and 4. This is when we introduce the House system and boys are allocated to one of four Houses – Cromer, Eddystone, Portland or Trinity (all named after famous beacons!). The system provides a focus for boys' energies on the sports field, in the classroom and in other areas of School life. Regular House and sectional assemblies take place, enabling success to be celebrated and team spirit fostered.

Throughout Lower School boys are taught by a Class Teacher who is responsible for their care and development, with Teaching Assistants providing further support.

In addition, they will be taught subjects such as International Studies, Music, Sport, Art, Design & Technology, IT, Drama and Cooking & Nutrition by Specialist Teachers who have their own teaching areas and resources.

Boys are taught in a mixed ability class and are set for Maths at some point in their time in Lower School. There are four sessions of Sport and PE each week and all boys have the opportunity to play in inter-school fixtures and House matches. Outside the classroom, the boys enjoy educational trips and outings and can join after-school clubs such as Lego Robotics, Chess, Singing and Hockey. They also experience Learning Outside the Classroom sessions several times each year to help develop their teamwork and leadership skills. Details of the **Lower School day** can be found on the School website.



I thought it would be a long time before my son came out of his shell, but over the course of a year, his teacher has transformed this quiet, reserved child into a confident and inquisitive little boy. – Beacon Parent



Middle School

Age 9 to 11

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Boys enter Middle School in Year 5 and receive further specialist teaching. The transition to full specialist teaching takes place in Year 6. Years 5 and 6 are about learning to be more independent and organised as the boys move from classroom to classroom. This change takes place in a familiar, secure environment and the boys have a Form Tutor who oversees their progress and welfare. Boys are placed in balanced, mixed ability forms but are set into ability groups for Maths in both Year 5 and Year 6. A programme of **Classics** is introduced in Year 6. Details of the **Middle School day** can be found on the School website.



Upper School

Age 11 to 13

In Years 7 and 8, boys are at the top of the School and are prepared for entry to leading independent senior schools. As some boys leave to take up grammar school places in Year 6, Year 7 is also an entry point for new boys. Year 8 presents an opportunity to take on leadership roles in many different areas, including Head Boy, Deputy Head Boy, Head and Deputy Head of House, Head Chorister and School Council. Boys are given greater responsibility and independence in making decisions and are encouraged to mentor younger boys and act as role models. Details of the **Upper School day** can be found on the School website.

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Preparation for Senior Schools

The **Prep School Baccalaureate** (PSB) is a two-year programme of study for pupils in Years 7 and 8. It provides a means to combine rigorous high academic standards with a broad and balanced curriculum. The PSB promotes vital skills in independent learning, in the appropriate use of technology and in critical thinking and analysis. The programme also enables the development of leadership, mentoring and team-working skills for the boys.

For senior schools, the PSB provides an excellent means of assessing pupils. Senior schools are usually able to make conditional offers (subject to final results) before the beginning of Year 8.

The PSB follows a rigorous academic programme based upon the Key Stage 3 curriculum, in addition to essential life skills. We have the freedom to pick the best elements of both the Common Entrance and National Curriculum programmes of study and models of assessment. Using this programme of study, Beacon boys are extremely well-prepared for entry to any senior independent school, whether it uses the PSB, Common Entrance or its own entrance exams.



If Rugby School can give him half the gifts that The Beacon has, then he will be enormously fortunate.

– Beacon Parent



Life after The Beacon

Most boys leave The Beacon at the end of Year 8, aged 13. They move on to leading independent day or boarding schools and a list of schools attended over the last few years is given below. The Beacon hosts a biennial Senior Schools Evening in November, when many leading independent schools send representatives to give presentations and talk to parents about their school choices. We encourage parents from Reception upwards to come along to these events and begin thinking about future school options. Weekly boarding is also now becoming more popular after Year 8, with boys returning home at weekends.

In the past few years, boys from The Beacon have been awarded Academic, Music, Drama, Art, DT, Sport and All-round scholarships to a wide variety of senior schools. Up-to-date details can be found on our website. Some boys also leave us at the end of Year 6 to take up places at local grammar schools, mainly Dr. Challoner's, Amersham, but also The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, Chesham Grammar and Aylesbury Grammar. Our Headmaster is always happy to discuss future school choices with parents.

Senior Independent Schools

Abingdon	Haileybury	Rugby
Aldenham	Magdalen College School	St Edward's, Oxford
Berkhamsted	Marlborough	St Paul's School
Bloxham	Merchant Taylors'	Shiplake
Bradfield	Millfield	Stowe
Charterhouse	Oratory	Uppingham
Claire's Court	Oundle	Wellington
Eton	Pangbourne	Westminster
Harrow	Radley	Winchester



The Beacon Community

The Beacon Association

The Beacon Association includes current parents, staff and boys as well as former parents and staff, Old Boys and anyone who has, or has had, a meaningful relationship with the School. It was founded in 2009 in the school's 75th year and we hope it will continue to develop as an active and vibrant group which is of benefit to its members and to the School.

The Old Beaconians' Society

This is open to all Old Boys of the school and holds regular reunions on and off site. It has its own Facebook page which is a means for Old Boys to communicate with each other.

The Beacon Parents' Society (BPS)

The BPS aims to provide social activities and, at the same time, raise funds for projects in the School. The committee organises a variety of activities and events for the whole Beacon community, such as quiz nights, cake sales, a Christmas fair, social evenings and a summer ball for parents and staff. Discos and other activities for the boys, such as a camp night and the summer swim club, are also arranged by the BPS.

Class Representatives

The Class Reps are parent volunteers and fulfil an important role within The Beacon. Every year we recommend that all classes in Pre-Prep have two Class Reps each and that Lower, Middle and Upper School have one Class Rep each. A Class Rep remains in post for the whole academic year and is responsible for helping to integrate new families into The Beacon, keeping up-to-date class lists, acting as a conduit between the BPS and the year group, organising social events for the class/year group and communicating any general class concerns to the School.

The External Community

The Beacon supports the local community through hosting various events at School and by participating in local fundraising initiatives. We also maintain links with other schools, both locally, nationally and internationally.



He has experienced more than we could ever have hoped, he has grown more and more confident and he has remained kind and humble. And that has only been possible because he respected and looked up to his teachers because they are inspirational and they care about their children. – Beacon Parent



Admissions

Deciding on the right school for your child is very important and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. Open Mornings are held during the Spring, Summer and Autumn Terms and details are published on our website. We are also happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. Please contact the Registrar on 01494 432764 or email admissions@beaconschool.co.uk to arrange a visit.

Entry points

Entry to all year groups is at the discretion of the Headmaster and is subject to the availability of places. The main points of entry are Reception (age 4+), Year 3 (age 7+) and Year 7 (11+) but places do become available in any year group. Please check with the Registrar for up-to-date information.

Pre-Prep (Reception to Year 2)

Entry to Reception is by date of registration and parents are therefore advised to register their sons well in advance of the required entry year. Boys who are registered are invited to spend an hour playing in Oakway, our Reception building, meeting our Head of Early Years and Head of Pre-Prep, prior to receiving their offer letter in September, a year before entry.

Lower, Middle and Upper School (Years 3 to 8)

Admission to the School from Year 3 onwards is subject to a general assessment of your son's abilities that is conducted through a combination of tests, interview and reports from his current school.

Registration

In order for a boy to be added to our entry list, it is necessary to complete and return the registration form, together with a non-refundable registration fee. When a firm offer has been made in writing, parents will be invited to complete a form to confirm their acceptance and will be asked to pay a deposit to secure the place. Please check our current Terms and Conditions on our website for how your deposit is used.

Bursaries

Bursaries are available from Year 3 upwards for boys who meet the School's entry requirements. Awards of up to 100% of fees can be made in accordance with the criteria published on the School website.



They have encouraged him to try new things, they have taught him not to fear failure, they have stretched him academically, they have given him the world of music, they have given him the confidence to perform, they have kept him grounded and they have lit the fire in his belly to compete to win.

– Beacon Parent





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